

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-13 ADP-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-03 SY-10 H-02 /081 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ ARN: DAKORN: JFC

22670 6/8/73

APPROVED BY NEA - MR. DAVIES

NEA/ GRK - MR. CHURCHILL

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R 090028 Z JUN 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 111853

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CASC, SY (BATES, JONATHAN)

SUBJECT: DETENTION IN SYRIA OF U. S. CITIZEN JONATHAN BATES

1. SUMMARY: PARENTS OF JONATHAN BATES, U. S. CITIZEN WHO HAS BEEN IN PRISON IN SYRIA SINCE FEBRUARY 1972 AND IS CURRENTLY ON TRIAL THERE, ARE DEPARTING NEW YORK ON JUNE 20 FOR ATHENS AND WILL LIVE IN NAXOS, CYCLADES DURING COMING SUMMER. THIS MESSAGE GIVES EMBASSY BACKGROUND ON BATES CASE AND REQUESTS EMBASSY NAME OFFICER TO SERVE AS LIAISON WITH BATES FAMILY AND PROVIDE FAMILY FULL ASSISTANCE IN MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH DEPARTMENT AND WITH EMBASSIES BEIRUT AND ROME.

2. JONATHAN BATES, SON OF PROFESSOR AND MRS. RALPH BATES OF NEW YORK CITY, ENTERED SYRIA ON FEBRUARY 7, 1972 AS TOURIST AND WAS ARRESTED IN DAMASCUS ON FEBRUARY 9. BATES WAS HELD BY SYRIANS WITHOUT NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS OR USG FROM TIME OF ARREST UNTIL EARLY JULY WHEN SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY INFORMED USINT DAMASCUS OF ARREST. BATES
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WAS THEREAFTER CHARGED WITH ATTEMPTED ESPIONAGE FOR ISRAEL AND IN NOVEMBER 1972 WAS PLACED ON TRIAL BEFORE SYRIAN MILITARY TRIBUNAL. TRIAL HAS PROCEEDED AT PACE OF ONE SESSION OF COURT PER MONTH. DURING MAY SESSION, PROSECUTOR REQUESTED " MAXIMUM SENTENCE" (I. E. DEATH PENALTY). DEFENSE PLEA WAS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR THIS MONTH BUT MAY BE

POSTPONED BY DEFENSE LAWYER UNTIL JULY OR LATER.

3. DEPARTMENT HAS WORKED VERY CLOSELY WITH PROFESSOR AND MRS. BATES FROM TIME THEIR SON' S DETENTION. PROFESSOR BATES IS RETIRED NYU PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND SOCIOLOGY AND NOTED AUTHOR. ALTHOUGH HE HAS LIVED IN U. S. SINCE SECOND WORLD WAR HE IS BRITISH SUBJECT; MRS. BATES, WHO OF JEWISH FAITH, IS U. S. CITIZEN, AS IS SON JONATHAN. ASST. SECRETARY SISCO HAS MET WITH PROFESSOR AND MRS. BATES TWICE DURING THEIR VISITS TO WASHINGTON AND HAS FOLLOWED CASE CLOSELY. NEA/ ARN IS ACTION OFFICE IN DEPARTMENT. CONTACTS WITH SYRIANS HAVE BEEN HANDLED BY ITALIANS WHO ARE PROTECTING POWER FOR U. S. INTERESTS IN SYRIA. OPERATIONALLY THIS HAS MEANT THAT DEPARTMENT' S CABLES HAVE BEEN SENT TO EMBASSY BEIRUT, WHICH IS IN DIRECT TOUCH WITH ITALIAN EMBASSY OFFICER DAMASCUS, TORQUATO CARDILLI, OR TO EMBASSY ROME FOR TRANSMITTAL TO ITALIAN EMBASSY DAMASCUS VIA FOREIGN MINISTRY. POSITION WE AND ITALIANS HAVE TAKEN WITH SYRIANS IS THAT JONATHAN BATES, WHILE INDISPUTABLY NAIVE IN ENTERING SYRIA AND SEEKING TO MAKE CONTACT WITH DAMASCUS JEWISH COMMUNITY, WAS NOT ENGAGED IN ESPIONAGE AND NOT ACTING AT DIRECTION OF ISRAEL OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY.

4. PROFESSOR AND MRS. BATES HAVE REMAINED IN NEW YORK CITY SINCE ARREST OF THEIR SON, BUT BECAUSE OF PROFESSOR BATES' FAILING HEALTH (HE IS 73 AND HAS HEART CONDITION) AND BECAUSE TRIAL NEARING END THEY NOW PLAN TO RETURN TO HOME THEY HAVE LONG HAD IN NAXOS. ASST. SECRETARY SISCO HAS ASSURED PROFESSOR AND MRS. BATES THAT ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE THROUGH EMBASSY ATHENS BY WHICH THEY CAN CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT WITH DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSIES BEIRUT AND ROME. BATES WILL BE ARRIVING ATHENS JUNE 21 AND REMAINING THERE APPROXIMATELY FOUR DAYS BE-
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FORE PROCEEDING TO NAXOS. EMBASSY SHOULD DESIGNATE OFFICER TO SERVE AS LIAISON AND PROVIDE NAME TO DEPARTMENT. IF POSSIBLE WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATION BETWEEN BATES FAMILY AND DEPARTMENT THROUGH ATHENS- WASHINGTON TIELINE.

5. DEPARTMENT WILL HENCEFORTH REPEAT ALL CABLES THIS

SUBJECT TO ATHENS; BEIRUT, ROME AND USUN NEW YORK
SHOULD DO LIKEWISE. ATHENS SHOULD INFORM DEPARTMENT,
BEIRUT, ROME AND USUN OF ANY INQUIRIES OR REQUESTS FOR
ASSISTANCE RECEIVED FROM BATES FAMILY. ACTION OFFICERS
IN DEPARTMENT ARE NEA/ ARN DEPUTY DIRECTOR DJEREJIAN AND
COUNTRY DIRECTOR KORN. RUSH

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 JUN 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE111853
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DAKORN: JFC
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730620/aaaajbum.tel
Line Count: 126
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12-Sep-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <09-Nov-2001 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 980209
Subject: DETENTION IN SYRIA OF U. S. CITIZEN JONATHAN BATES
TAGS: CASC, PINS, SY, (BATES, JONATHAN)
To: ATHENS
BEIRUT
ROME
USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005